



Partnerships and Programmes Review and Development Policy (PPRDP)

Policy no:	3.4
Version no. & date:	V04
Next review due:	September 2023
Responsible Committee:	SMT
Approved by & date:	BoG April 2022
Linked policies/ documents:	Risk Management Policy Risk Register Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy Corporate Social Responsibility Policy
External reference	Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) British Council (BC) Pearson (Edexcel)
	UK Quality Code UKSCQA/02 [March 2018] Expectations for Standards, S3 <i>Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.</i> Expectations for Quality, Q2 <i>The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses</i>
Audience:	Senior management, staff, students and all other stakeholders.

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1. Introduction

Oxford Business College will be entrepreneurial and seize opportunities for development of the College's provision as they arise. The Partnership and Programme Review and Development Policy (PPRDP) sets out the College's approach to establishing and developing new partnerships and/or programmes of study in line with our strategic plan, development within the HE Sector, regional and national labour needs and the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ). The policy links to the Risk Management Framework which includes the Risk Management Policy and the Risk Register, where issues relating to the risks associated with the growth of College provision through partnership development are considered. Any new partnership and programme are assessed for quality and monitored in terms of their scalability and appropriateness through due diligence and validation processes carried out on the College by respective partners, and by the College on respective partners.

2. Aim and Objectives

The aim of the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Policy (PPRDP) is to identify a method with procedures for ensuring that any new partnership or programme is vetted for academic suitability and viability.

To this end, the PPRD policy has the following objectives:

- To provide the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC) and the Academic and Quality Board (AQB) with guidance on how to evaluate new partnerships and programmes under consideration so they are in line with the College's strategic plan and its learning, teaching and assessment strategy.
- To ensure that the College scrutinises all new partnerships and programmes according to agreed criteria.
- To ensure that the College continues to monitor and review existing partnerships and programmes in terms of meeting their objectives and making recommendations to the AQB for the approval of any alterations, amendment or additions to existing partnerships and/or programmes.
- To coordinate the decision-making processes of the PPRDC which reports to the AQB, with the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC) that reports to the Senior Management Team (SMT) and, thereby, ensure that academic and business needs of the College are evaluated before the Board of Governors (BoG) give their approval.
- To ensure that before any new partnership or programme is introduced at the College that the needs of current and future students are prioritised.

3. Implementation of the PPRD Policy and Procedures

The PPRD Policy and Procedures are carried out by the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee, which reports to the Academic and Quality Board and (AQB) and the Strategic Planning and Advisory Committee (SPAC) which reports to the Senior Management Team (SMT). The Terms of reference for these two committees (PPRDC & SPAC) should be read in conjunction with this policy.

4. Framework Levels and Descriptors

A key priority of the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Policy (PPRDP) is to ensure that the curriculum design of all academic programmes at the College are fully aligned with the levels and qualification descriptors of the FHEQ. This assurance is provided by the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC), which recommends for approval any new academic programme, or changes to existing programmes of study. Apart from the College's own level 3 Foundation and Pearson level 4 HNC and level 5 HND courses, all courses offered at the College are undergraduate degree courses (level 4 to level 6) and postgraduate degree courses (level 7) validated by university partners, with integrated foundation at level 3. Through these partnerships, the College is able to ensure that all undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered at the College are fully aligned with the FHEQ levels and qualification descriptors, including the five core characteristics of level 6 as stipulated in Annex D outcome classification descriptions as follows:

- knowledge and understanding
- cognitive skills
- practical skills
- transferable skills
- professional competences, where relevant.

5. Expectations for Standards and Quality: Core Practices

The various activities that fall within the scope of the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Policy (PPRDP) are designed to ensure that all the core practices of the UK Quality Code (UKSQA) are met, including the Expectation for Standards and Expectations for Quality as detailed below:

5.1. Expectations for Standards

- Through the Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC) and the Enhancement Committee, both of which report to the Academic and Quality Board (AQB), the College is able to ensure that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the levels and qualification descriptors in the Framework for Higher Education (FHEQ).
- Through the PPRDC and Enhancement Committee, the College is also able to ensure that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

- The Academic Board (AcB) receives reports from the PPRDC which allows it to ensure that effective quality assurance arrangements are in place at all times when the College works in partnership with other organisations. Through the delegated powers of the AcB, the PPRDC is responsible for making sure that these arrangements are aligned with the requirements of validating bodies or organisations that the College is partnered with, and that the standards of the awards are credible and secure, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.
- In order to make effective use of external expertise, the PPRDC has a permanent member who is an external advisor with academic expertise. The Board of Governors (BoG) and the Audit and Risk Committee also have non-executive members with relevant expertise. The College is committed to the commissioning of external consultants and/or accreditation bodies such as the British Accreditation Council to carry out annual internal audits, with assessment and classification processes that ensure the College is in line with the core practices of the UK Quality Code.

5.2. Expectations for Quality

- The Partnership and Programme Review and Development Committee (PPRDC) and the Quality Enhancement Committee (QEC), which report to the Academic Board (AcB), ensure that the College designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.
- The PPRDC is responsible for ensuring that the College has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- The PPRDC is responsible for making sure that the College has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.
- The PPRDC is able to ensure that effective quality assurance arrangements are in place when the College works in partnership with other organisations. The PPRDC is responsible for making sure that these arrangements are aligned with the requirements of validating bodies and/or organisations that the College is partnered with, and that the standards of the awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.

6. Programme and Partnership Development

Any programme development at the College must be justified through specific needs analysis of new programmes, or changes to existing programmes. Based upon this needs analysis, the College is able to decide whether to establish a new partnership.

6.1. Needs Analysis for New Programmes

The PPRDC draws from the following sources of information when researching the need for any new partnership or programme at the College:

- Through marketing and analysis of applicant profiles from student admissions and marketing, the College is able to identify student demographics and student choice of programme. This information is used to identify appropriate locations and programmes/courses that prospective students from our target segments are from.
- The College aligns its aims in terms of student recruitment and partnership development with the priorities of local enterprise strategies.
- The College establishes new partnerships and programmes that align with our sustainable development goals as noted in the College's Corporate Social Responsibility Policy.
- Analysis of student and staff feedback on existing programmes ensures that the College is able to identify what future programmes would benefit communities.
- Suggestions from stakeholders may also enable the College to identify a need for a new programme.
- Consultation with employers to identify employability competencies by local businesses
- Analysis of global markets in the development of provision.

6.2. Identifying Changes to Existing Programmes

Whether any changes for existing programmes are required or not, they are informed by the findings in the Annual Monitoring Review (AMR), which is the culmination of the annual review cycle, and periodic reviews from partners which include the following:

- Consultations
- Module Reviews
- Student Surveys
- Achievement Rates
- Student Graduate Outcomes
- External Audits
- Risk Analysis
- Competitor Analysis
- Local Labour Market Needs (LEPs)
- Responding to External Environmental Changes (e.g., the Pandemic)

6.3. Approach to Partnership Development

Partnerships are assessed by the governing body of the College (BoG) according to key criteria before the prospective partner is approached. The Senior Management Team are encouraged to network and actively search for partnerships that would be beneficial to the College. They should not be hindered by bureaucracy, nor should it be a barrier to securing a successful outcome. However, in this regard the Senior Management Team are expected to have undertaken some preliminary research before initiating a new partnership.

Prospective partners must meet the following criteria:

- Hold degree awarding powers
- Positive outcome of most recent QAA/QSR report
- Holds a TEF Award
- Student success results meeting and exceeding benchmarks
- Student feedback/NSS survey
- Subjects offered and mode of delivery
- No negative press on social media or any other platform
- Financially stable and has growth plans
- Ranking of partner in the HE Sector

7. Approval Procedures

The College has procedures for approving new programmes and new partnerships and for making any changes to existing programmes on a case by case basis. Checks that support the academic case for a new programme or partnership, or changes to existing programmes are carried out by the Partnerships and Programmes Review and Development Committee (PPRDC). Checks that support the business case for a new programme or partnership, or changes to existing programmes are carried out by the Strategic Planning and Advisory Committee (SPAC). When carrying out check for due diligence the following tables are used.

7.1. New Programme Approval

Section A: Academic Criteria (PPRDC)

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
1	The design and content of the programme are aligned to the College's Strategic Plan		
2	The programme draws from the College's existing strengths		
3	The programme can be delivered following the College's LTA Strategy		
4	Currency of the programme in terms of graduate employment outcomes		
5	The design and content of the programme delivers key employability competencies		
6	The appeal of the programme to the target demographic		

Section B: Business Operational Criteria (SPAC)

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
1	Market value of the programme		
2	Competitor analysis indicates there is a gap in the market		
3	The College can feasibly provide infrastructure and equipment to effectively deliver the programme(s)		
4	The staffing requirements and the College's ability to meet them		
5	Whether the programme can be delivered through an existing partnership or if there is a need to establish a new partnership to deliver it.		
6	Whether the programme can be delivered at the College's current campuses or if new campuses are required		
7	The potential for new pathways for the programme		
8	The recognised accreditations that are offered by the programme		

7.2. Making Changes to Programmes (PPRDC)

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
1	Recommendations for changes to the programme from students or staff		
2	Changes recommended by internal or external reviews or committees		
3	The methods of assessment of the programme are accessible to all students		
4	There are factors that require changes to the mode of delivery		
5	The content of the programme is inclusive		
6	There is opportunity for flexibility of delivery		

7.3. New Partnership Approval

Before the College considers any partnership proposal, the PPRDC and SPAC meet to complete the following checklist for due diligence purposes:

Section A: Academic Need (PPRDC)

1. Value Added by the Partnership

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
1.1	Does the partnership align to the College's strategic plan?		
1.2	Is there a need for the provision in the location under consideration?		
1.3	Does it meet with local enterprise priorities?		
1.4	Does it align with the academic needs of students identified by College stakeholders?		
1.5	Does it provide students with opportunities of relevant employability competencies?		
1.6	Does it empower our target demographic?		

2. Expectations of Potential Partners

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
2.1	Holds degree awarding powers		
2.2	Positive outcome of most recent QAA/QSR report		
2.3	Holds a TEF Award		
2.4	Student success results meeting and exceeding benchmarks		
2.5	Student feedback/NSS survey		
2.6	Subjects offered and mode of delivery		
2.7	Negative press on social media or any other platform		
2.8	Is financially stable and has growth plans		
2.9	Ranking of partner in the HE Sector.		

Section B: Feasibility and Viability Checklist (SPAC)

No	Criteria	Comment	Source
1	Competitor analysis indicates there is a gap in the market		
2	The College can feasibly provide infrastructure and resources to effectively deliver the programme(s) under the partnership arrangements		
3	The partnership does not place the College at an unreasonable risk financially or otherwise		
4	The partnership does not negatively impact on existing partnerships or programmes		
5	The partnership will add value to the College, its students, other stakeholders and the wider community		